LBJ Turns To Government To Find His Talent

By William Chapman
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WASHINGTON—If a President's administration could be characterized by a single, composite personality, Franklin D. Roosevelt's might appear as a bright, brash planner, Dwight D. Eisenhower's as a graying, middle-aged businessman, John F. Kennedy's as a witty, Ivy League intellectual.

But what type would represent Lyndon Johnson's? Most probably he would be a competent, seasoned government executive with a battered briefcase—a comfortable, pleasant sort, less sparkling than Kennedy's man, younger than Ike's, and less abrasive than F.D.R.'s.

Such stereotypes are little more than handy labels, but they do suggest the presidential preferences that each man brought to the task of appointing top executives. President Johnson's preference is now becoming clear: More than any President in recent history, he leans toward the experienced government executive, the career bureaucrat, the proven in-house expert.

A tipoff to Mr. Johnson's administration is provided in an analysis of the 281 nonjudicial appointments he has made since taking office. Fifty-seven per cent of those top-echelon appointees have come from within government, mostly federal—That is about 10 per cent more than in F.D.R.'s choices, 5 per cent more than Kennedy's, and 20 per cent more than Mr. Eisenhower's, according to surveys made in recent years by political scientists.

Other presidential penchants can be gleaned from these statistical samplings. Despite his valued consensus with business, Mr. Johnson has drawn only about 15 per cent of his appointees from its ranks. (Of 180 major Eisenhower appointments, 36 per cent came from the worlds of business and finance.)

And those who believe that Kennedy cornered the academic market may be surprised to learn that Mr. Johnson has relied on university professors to approximately the same extent. It is even said that, like his predecessor, LBJ can be accused of being a Harvard-raider, having recently lured an economist for his Council of Economic Advisers and a law professor for the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

JFK Appointees Elevated

However, the Johnson preference, overwhelmingly, is for the man already in government work. What explains it? Basically he regards public service as man's most valuable and useful work. Recently he told an audience of young people that public service is more rewarding and useful than any other field—including the ministry. Another factor, of course, is that he did not have to stock a completely new executive staff when he took office—having inherited one intact from Kennedy.

He apparently valued Kennedy appointees highly because he has elevated many of them to higher jobs. In fact, he has recruited only three of the present 11 Cabinet secretaries from outside the Kennedy fold (Henry Fowler of Treasury, John Connor of Commerce and John Gardner of HEW). Three others were originally brought into government by Kennedy and subsequently raised to the top by President Johnson (Atty. Gen. Nicholas Katzenbach, Postmaster General Lawrence O'Brien and Robert Weaver of HUD). The remaining four were appointed by Mr. Kennedy (Dean Rusk of State, Robert McNamara of Defense, Orville Freeman of Agriculture, Stewart Udall of Interior and W. Willard Wirtz of Labor).

Mr. Johnson has broken some long-standing appointment traditions in elevating career men. For the first time, the General Services Administration and Veterans Administration have career men at their helms (Lawson B. Knott Jr. and William J. Driver respectively). But when Mr. Johnson and HEW Sec. Gardner looked into the Food and Drug Administration they found no suitable careerists and went outside to name Asst. Surgeon Gen. James L. Goddard as the new commissioner.

The President has not forgotten old political friends. To head the U.S. Information Agency he sidestepped the custom of naming well-known news personalities to choose his personal ally, Leonard H. Marks, a Washington lawyer. Another Washington friend, Abe Fortas, went to the Supreme Court. A bipartisan palship of long standing was acknowledged when the President appointed the son of former Republican House Leader Charles A. Halleck to the District of Columbia Court of General Sessions.

Congressional opinion seems to hold that Mr. Johnson's appointments are competent and enlightened if not brilliant. "I'd have to say they are pretty good," says Rep. Bradford Morse (R-Mass.), who has kept a steady eye on how top jobs are filled. "There haven't been any real bloopers, although I think the magnetism of so many Kennedy appointments is missing."

Not all appointees, of course, have been greeted with such agreeable acceptance. There is an undercurrent of criticism against Central Intelligence Agency Director Adm. William F. Raborn, primarily on grounds that he had no prior experience in intelligence and is said to be not the tidiest administrator. Liberals have been disgruntled with the appointment of Undersecretary of State Thomas C. Mann because of his identification with hard-line politics and a toleration of military regimes in Latin America. And there is a widespread feeling that Mr. Johnson's White House staff lacks the glitter and brains of Mr. Kennedy's.

Civil Service Chairman John W. Macy, the President's chief talent scout, says the President wants men of intelligence and youth (35 to 50, preferably) who share the administration's general point of view. Party allegiance is not an absolute (Mr. Johnson proudly boasts that he did not know of Gardner's Republican record until five minutes before announcing him), but no name gets to the top without political clearance. Macy usually checks a potential appointee's credentials with the Democratic National Committee. But W. Marvin Watson, a presidential aide and veteran Texas political technician, makes separate checks, particularly with local politicians. No appointment is made without a rigid Federal Bureau of Investigation field check to locate